**5b Page 60 AUDIOSCRIPT**

Upper Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

1.33

**I = Interviewer; J = Journalist**

**I:** I know you like exotic places – have you tried visiting India?

**J:** I was just there actually – in Kerala in the south-west. I was intending to go on to tour other parts of India, but Kerala was so fascinating I stayed on …

**I:** Were you on holiday?

**J:** No … well, it was meant to be a holiday, but actually it turned into more than that …

**I:** Oh dear …

**J:** Oh, no. I don’t regret changing my plans … I became so interested in the place that I started to write an article about it for the newspaper I work for …

**I:** Really? Is it a travel article?

**J:** Not really. It’s more sociological, I guess. I’m trying to show what a remarkable place Kerala is in the developing world. You see, it’s a small state with a big population and the average income is only about $300 a year. Usually that would mean people having a fairly poor quality of life, but that’s not the case. In fact Kerala stands out as a kind of model of social development. The population is highly literate and well-educated and they seem quite well-off, compared to other parts of India. They’re healthy and live almost as long as Americans or Europeans; it seems that infant mortality is also very low. Also, women, who’ve umm … always traditionally been the head of the household, continue to be very active (and equal) participants in society.

**I:** Mmm … that’s really interesting. I remember going there with my wife in the 1990s. But we were just tourists and my memories of it are as a very tranquil and beautiful place, with gorgeous beaches and lagoons …

**J:** Well, of course that’s the part of it that tourists like to spend time visiting. But tranquil is not necessarily the adjective I would use. Trivandrum, the main city, where we stopped to visit an Indian journalist I know – a highly cultured man, by the way – is absolutely hectic. The people there are very politically engaged: they never stop debating; there are often strikes on the buses or parades of demonstrators – some medical students started protesting when we were there and went on protesting for four days.

Life

**I:** So why do you think it’s such a successful society?

**J:** Well, there are essentially two reasons, I think. The first is that the Keralites are naturally tolerant people: you find Hindus, Muslims and Christians all living peacefully alongside each other and foreigners are treated no differently to anyone else. And secondly, the government has invested a lot in health and education and goes on investing a lot. The land is incredibly fertile and well-organised – small farmers cultivate every inch of it so none is wasted, which I regret to say is not always the case in some developing countries.

**I:** Sounds fascinating. Please remember to send me a copy of the article when it’s published.

**J:** Of course I will.